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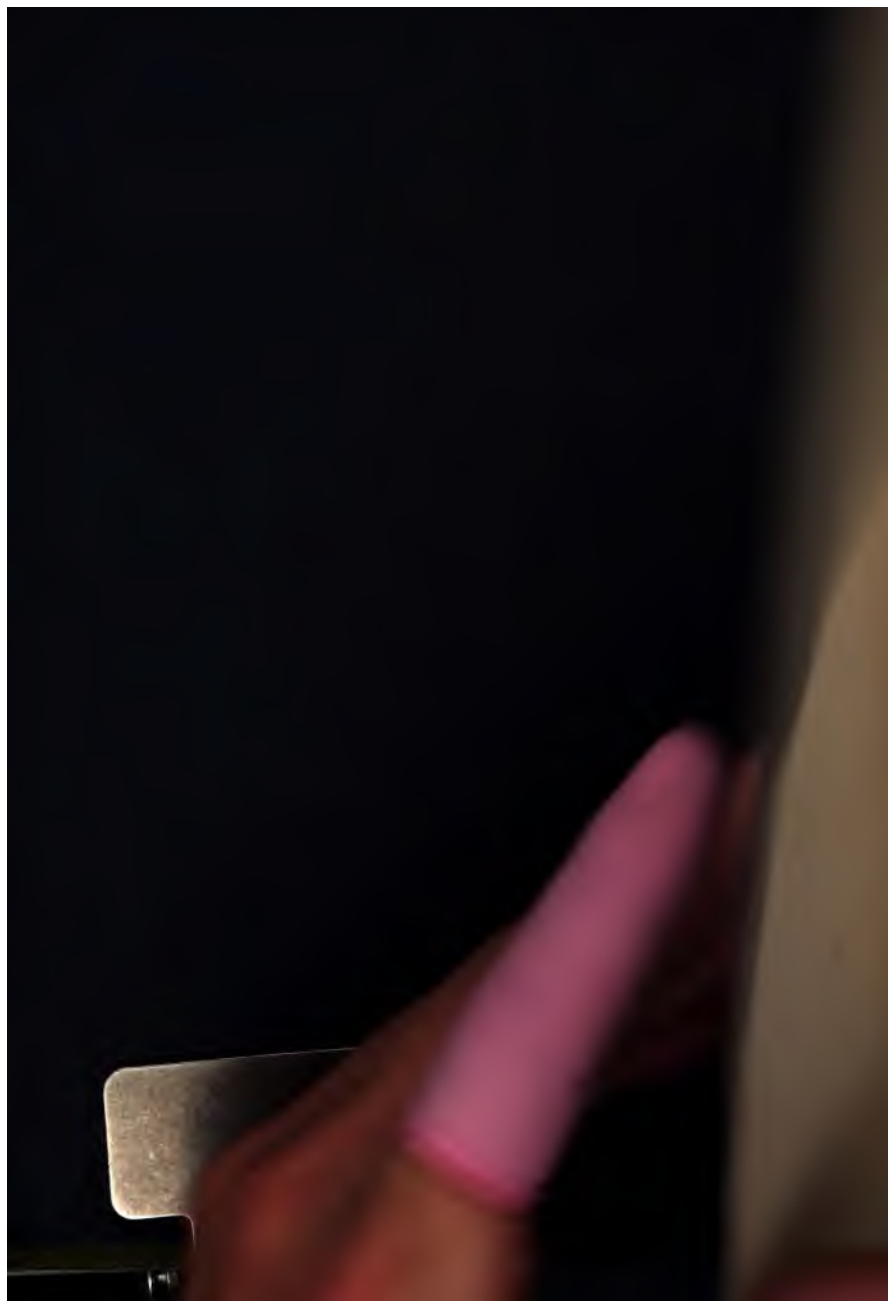
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CYRIL AND LIONEL

AND OTHER POEMS



NEL

STUDIES

LOVICH

lovers"

am I content to make
for no praise for my
greatest reward that I dare
more, I deserve no less "

PATERNOSTER SQUARE

16-



CYRIL AND LIONEL

AND OTHER POEMS

CYRIL AND LIONEL

AND OTHER POEMS

A VOLUME OF SENTIMENTAL STUDIES

BY

MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH

"These I singing in spring collect for lovers "

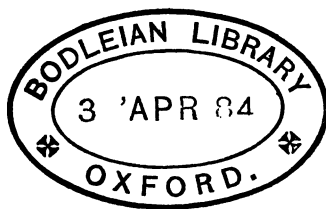
"... as I was willing to commit the fault, so am I content to make amends. Howsoever the case standeth, I looke for no praise for my labour, but pardon for my good will: it is the greatest reward that I dare ask, and the least that they can offer: I desire no more, I deserve no less "

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1884

250. f. 46.



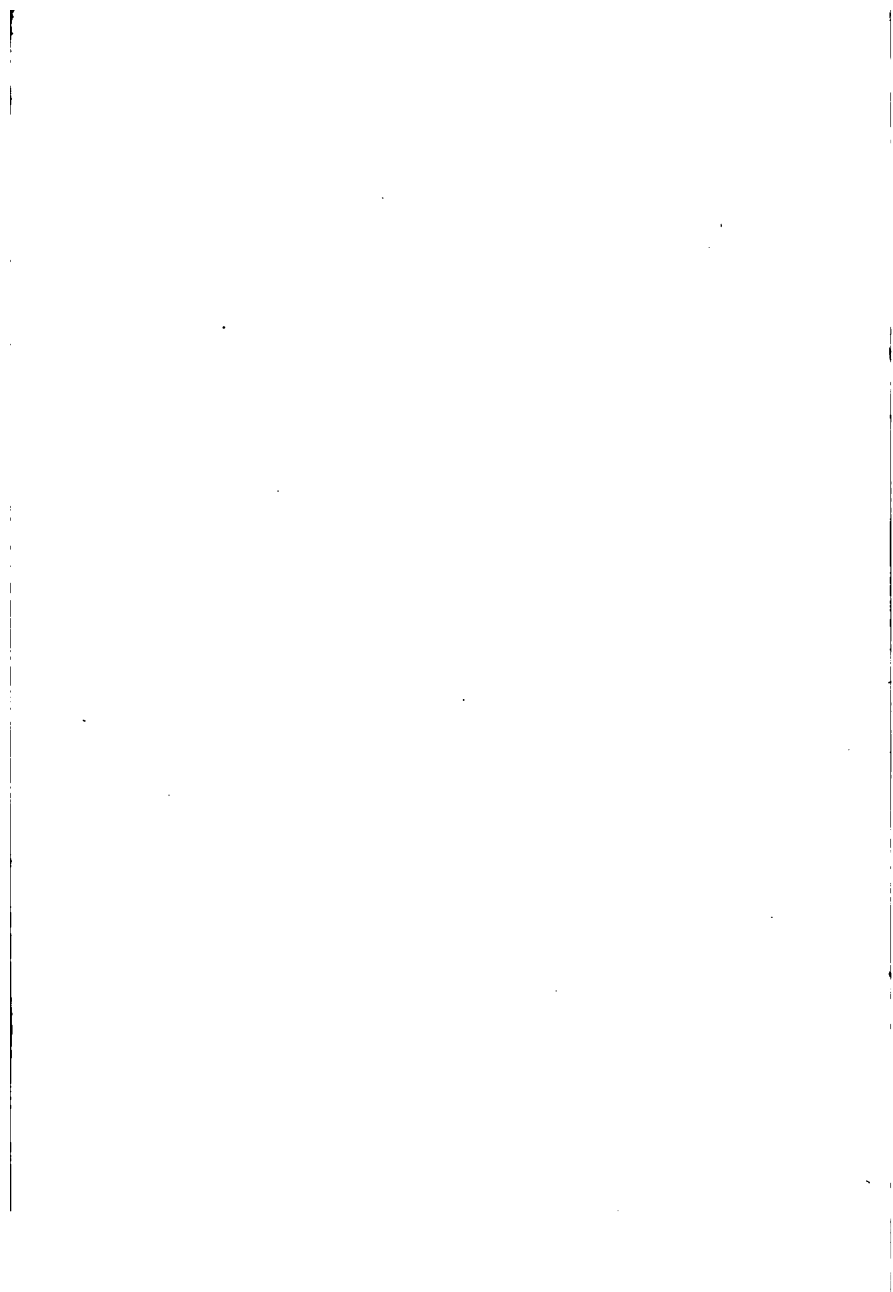
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TO —

“Souls only understand souls.”

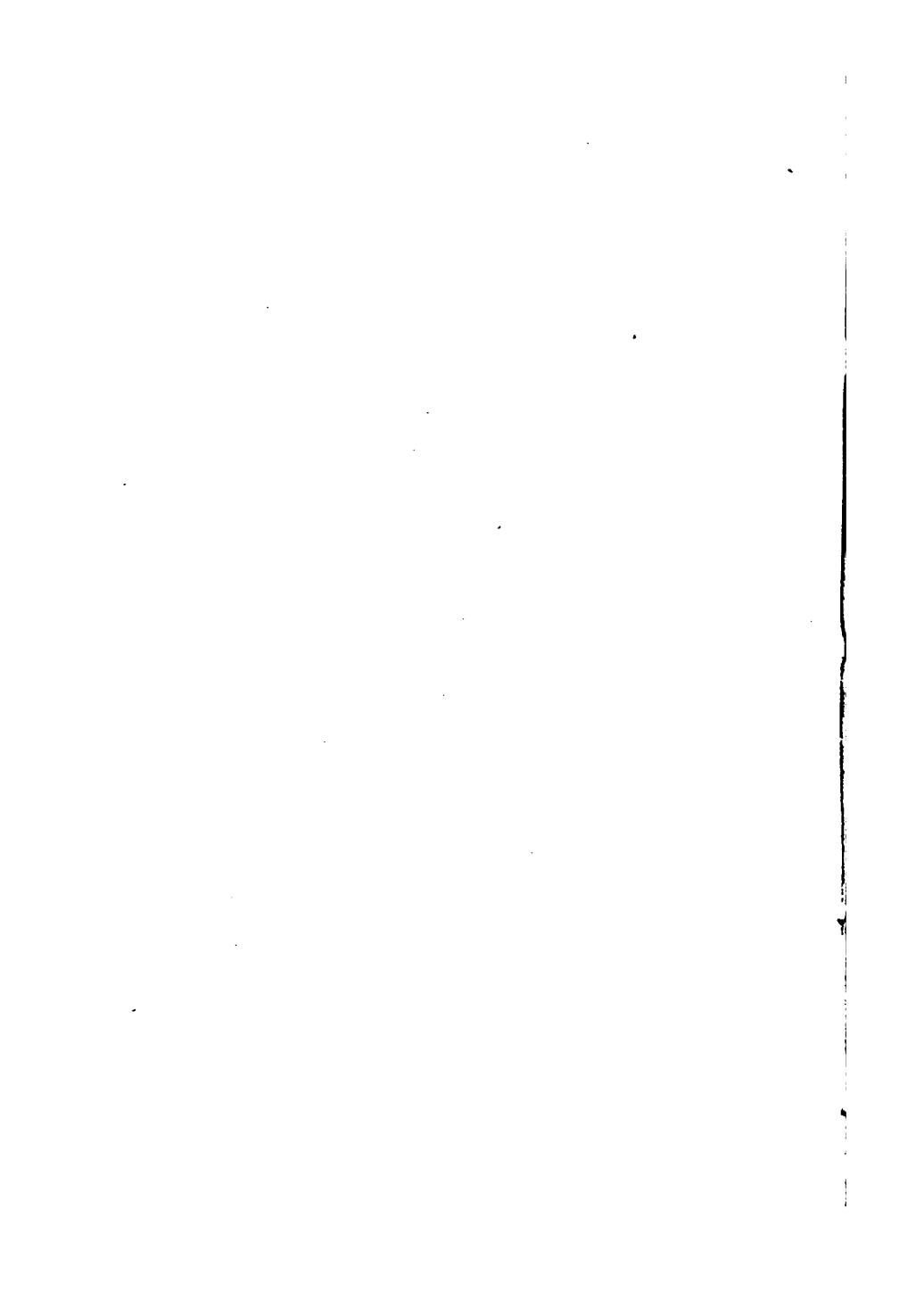
“Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen,
Ist dem Tode schon anheimgegeben,
Wird für keinen Dienst der Erde taugen,
Und doch wird er vor dem Tode beben,
Wer die Schönheit angeschaut mit Augen !

“Ewig währt für ihn der Schmerz der Liebe,
Denn ein Thor nur kann auf Erden hoffen
Zu genügen einem solchen Triebe :
Wen der Pfeil des Schönen je getroffen,
Ewig währt für ihn der Schmerz der Liebe !”



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“ Stolz und trotzig gegen Alles, doch vom Schönen unterjocht.”

TO ONE OF MY READERS.

6
O FAIR as those I love, and sweet and fair
As those whose sweetness is so fair to me,
O dearer than the love my love does dare
Hardly to greet when sight grows ecstasy,
As strange as any idol of the past
Whose youth mine worshipped in a youthful trance,
Are not thine tenderness and strength? And hast
Thou not a mouth controlling all romance?
Is love more meaningful than are thy frowns?
Hast thou not shyness for a rosy shroud,
And curls of misty gold that clings and crowns
A breathing fairness and a marble cloud?
O mayst thou take this volume in thy hand,
And turn the leaves, and read, and understand!

CYRIL.

"The World's a Wood, in which all lose their Way,
Though by a different Path each goes astray."

I.

WHY I WRITE.

IF my desire were thine, and wert thou near,
For mine thy hand, for mine thy smile, thy cheek,
My fancy as thy law, thy heart too weak
To bear the weight of love, too strong for fear

To strive to speak.

No need for me to call thee fair, sweet, dear,
Dear, sweet, and fair, to raise my voice and seek
A louder speech for love therein to wreak
The anguished love that for thy soul to hear

I need not speak.

And what my heart and soul and life and brain
Could never hope to say, nor mean to show
With all their strength, with all their strength and strain,

Nor strive to speak :

The thoughtful ecstasy, the heart's overflow,
The rapture rushing on through joy to pain,
The sinking soul beneath life's dizzy blow,
My love should speak.

II.

A SONG OUT OF THE SEASON.

I.

In its hurry,
Time to bury,
Flown away the flurried rage is,
Freely flying,
Birdlike sighing,
Panting after fashion's cages.

II.

Fancies endless,
Scarcely friendless,
Find and leave me hardly lonely,
Most who love town
Though out of town,
Neighbours, friends, and foes too,—only

III.

Friend and lover
Haunt and hover,
Dim and ghostlike push their way in,
Now the season
Leaves to reason
Room for dreams to rest and play in.

IV.

All the place is
Filled with faces,
Falling shadows, masks unveiling,
Loves once splendid,
Friendships ended,
Fancy's fading, passion's paling ;

V.

Love beginning
Webs for winning
Lovely death from life's sweet greeting,
Love that hopeless
Cannot hope less
Than delight's most fearless meeting ;

VI.

London follies
Where the soul is
All the madder in aspiring,
All the fonder
That beyond her
Minute, fate leaves no desiring !

VII.

There they simper,
Laugh or whimper,
Tearless, silent, ever after,
Things so hollow
That to follow
Hearts would break in pain's own laughter.

VIII.

All that seeking
Eyes were speaking,
Speechless lovers' loudest saying,
And the bolder
Words, but colder,
Soundless now in one decaying.

IX.

Love's fair token
Lost or broken,
What remains but cold that blanches
Friendship's chamber,
Where now clamber
Newer leafage, darker branches?

X.

Love nor money
Can bring honey
From the blossom's youth attained,
Once that hung there,
Ere we flung there
Freezing fashions, blights that tainted.

XI.

But the past is
Locked and fast is
From whatever strains to reach it,
And annoyance
Will to joyance
Wounded show and sadly teach it.

XII.

Lovers scattered,
Love once flattered,
Friends whose friendship might not tarry,
Ashes, embers,
Who remembers ?
One whose whispered hints were starry

XIII.

Now more far is
Than a star is,
Falsier than the shepherd Paris,
Hardly nearer,
None was dearer !
Seldom meet we : lives in Paris.

XIV.

Next another,
Beauty's brother,
Born with springtime, one with Maytime,
Soft and truthful,
Heart and youth full
Morning-like, with dawning daytime.

XV.

From the bushes
Where the blush is
Of the crimson curling petal,
Death discloses
Not his roses :
Lasting love could but forget all.

XVI.

Death, with meetness
To his sweetness,
Brought the gift of dainty dying,
Ever giving
To the living
Tender sorrow's gentlest sighing.

XVII.

Those who wrestling
Still are nestling
Not beneath the growing grasses,
Such luck tends not,
For it lends not
Friends or foes the shroud that passes

XVIII.

All the weaving
Mind's deceiving,
Being made of grief and parting,
Love deceitful,
Thought conceitful,
Truthful half and dearly smarting.

XIX.

Months that alter
Jack and Walter,
Make of old bonds things so hazy ;
Is it better
Your new fetter
Linking me to Ned or Daisy ?

XX.

Do I prize her,
Is he wiser,
More than others, fairer, nicer ?
Is he truer,
If you knew her
Closer, say, what could entice her ?

XXI.

Slim and graceful
Limbs, and face full
Of the latest modern manner,
Fast and funny,
Locks as sunny
As Apollo's streaming banner.

XXII.

Girdled narrow
As an arrow,
Beauty's Queen when grace we lend her ;
Haughty figure,
She is eager
Let one see how tall and slender.

XXIII.

Bold and manlike,
White and swanlike,
Cool and candid, such is Daisy—
Three and twenty,
Blood in plenty,
Ned is sleepy, fair and lazy :

xxiv.

Skin so creamy,
Looks so dreamy,
You would take him for a poet,
For whom fairies
Search what fair is,
Bring it for his eyes to view it.

xxv.

Eyes like lilac,
Where all I lack
Soulful swims in trust's enlacing ;
Horsey taste too,
Ned's in haste to
Show he's up to any racing.

xxvi.

Neddy weaker
Than a seeker
After souls to cling and feed on,
Will he live to
Lose, or give to
Years his youth until they lead on,

XXVII.

Older, sadder,
To the ladder
Where the past or harsh or mute is ?
Handsome Bertie's
In his thirties,
With a wife and social duties,

XXVIII.

Who did marry
Lady Carry
And her temper with her treasures !
And the nameless
Ones who claim less :
Fortune-stranded lords of pleasures.

XXIX.

Luckless lovers
Silence covers ;
Foreign shame for love's alluring.
Smiling Fashion,
Loves not passion ;
Guilt once found out finds no curing.

xxx.

Had they shown not,
Had we known not,
Ah ! their story had been other !
Virtue's shoulder,
Hardly colder,
Only guessing deeds they smother.

xxxI.

Why complaining ?
Ah ! still raining ?
Well, the weather's surely thorough.
Gets it rougher ?
What at Dover ?
Neddy wants to cross to-morrow.

III.

When Love beseeching played his subtlest part,
I coldly gazed beyond his idle game,
I took no heed of loveless beauty's claim
To stir unrest in my unquiet heart.

And yet I loved, though loveliness and art
Were but false symbols of my mystic aim ;
I waited for my love, who never came ;
I never knew love's sudden throb and start

Until you came ; and then, O love, I knew
That I had loved but you and only you,
'Mid all those meaningful and dreamy days
That grew to weeks and lingered on to years.
For you I strained my songs and learned my lays,
For you my love and all my waste of tears.

IV.

LOVE IN THE SNOW.

Ah ! the summer and strength of thee, sweet !
Thy face and the curls that surround,
Thy hair in the sun, but thy feet
Are treading the frost of the ground.

The spring is thy master in vain,
The summer thy lord but in name ;
The desire of their heart as a rain
Has not drenched all thy beauty in flame !

Ah ! the spring and the scent of thy lilies,
The pride as a powder of gold,
That hovers and curls where the chill is
On thy petals, whose flushes are cold.

The mouths of the months that are bright,
When for love the young world is forlorn,
Can melt not thy snowy delight,
Or teach thee a road to the morn ;
When others are thralls of the voices
That call once and men must obey,
For thy will that is loveless no choice is
'Mid the loves that are led or that sway.

No craving to love or be loved,
For the rapture of slave or of lord,
No wish troubles thy lashes unmoved
By the steel of love's double-edged sword.
Though the breezes of spring breathe and fashion
Their treasons and dreams everywhere,
No faintness can cling of their passion
Aromatic to wake thee to care.

The fancy of spring is desire,
And beauty the star of his blood ;
His nerves all are mingling with fire,
And the blossom is scorched with the bud.
Cold and careless the leaves of thy lily,
Cold and careless the breast they enclose ;
Love, the heart of thy blossom is chilly,
Though summer the place where it grows.

Ah ! the summer and strength of thee, sweet !
Thy face and the curls that surround,
Thy hair in the sun, but thy feet
Are treading the frost of the ground.

V.

GANYMEDE.

In eagle flight what star-sent messenger
Bore thee from drowsy earth, a slumberous sign
Of love across the Milky Way's confine,
Where all past seemed an empty sepulchre,

When standing by, a lovely harbinger,
The gods received the rapture and the wine,
Thyself unmoved, for beauty though divine
Could mortal frailty not divinely stir.

The gates of paradise no whither lead,
Their golden pillars front the deathless void,
For none the entrancing madness unalloyed
Bubbles from passion's cup whose burning need
Thy coldness pours forth—from heaven destroyed
To hearts enamoured a new Ganymede.

VI.

HEALTH AND ROMANCE.

Child of the fruitful earth, and first-born daughter
Of her whose sway thy elder grace endows
With consecrated might of holy vows
And blameless hopes which nature's self has taught
her,
Though deadly be the guilt these shame or slaughter,
Yet fancy tears aside the downward boughs
And sets thee shrinking in thy sinless house,
The earthly goddess of the shallow water.

That fondness crystalline—it could at first,
But quenches not the lover's search and thirst
Now—vainly stretchest thou thy hand's beguiling,
He passes by, forgetful of thy scorn,
The vernal coolness time has parched defiling :
Health-clad once ! now thy garment threadbare worn.

VII.

ENDYMION.

O Soul unlettered in the soul's device,
O Mind unread in riddles of the mind,
And void as summer strivings in the wind,
Breath flower-fed ; O barren breast of ice,
O beauteous bodily grace, free from vice ;
O tender heart so dearly cold and kind ;
Grey eyes, so blue and dreamy, heavenly blind,
Whose haunting lashes cloudily entice.

Why wast thou bred within the halls of Love,
Who taught thee ways thou know'st not meanings of,
A child not born for such inheritance ?
O why was thine the lot of Love's one dove,
Or of the youth whose sleeping limbs entrance
The lord of sleep in moonlight of romance ?

VIII.

A RIDDLE.

The prayer in the silence of the lover
Is of unspoken love and hope and pride ;
Though cloudily the darkness deepen over
The skies their secrets do not wholly hide.
Their spheral speech may starrily discover
The whispered words unuttered through the day,
But heard of night when night begins to hover
And soundless echoes of the dusky way.

Beyond your soul's response my grief's excess
Does lie. My sorrow do not strive to guess.
Obscurer far than heights or depths of love,
And further than the stars are from the land,
There are things, love, you have heard never of,
And if you heard you would not understand.

IX.

LOVE AND TRUTH.

I.

Thou art youth and I am love,
I am young and thou art fair ;
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.
Spring around, beneath, above,
All for us to spoil and share.
 I am love and thou art youth ;
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.

II.

Fondness, dearest, is it thine ?
Yes, the downcast cheek assures
What thy lover's dreams design :
Beauty's liking love allures.
 Sweet as falsehood, strong to soothe,
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.

III.

Tell me what thy fondness is ?
Only seen and hardly heard ;

Goes it as far as a kiss ?
Does it warble as a bird ?
 Sweet as fancy, strong to soothe,
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.

IV.

Tell me, is it only such
As a lover never knows ?
Crimson brimming, at a touch
Crumble petals of the rose.
 Sweet as falsehood, strong to soothe,
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.

V.

Idly stoops the lovely day,
Lonely now begins the night ;
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.
Is my hope the day, O say,
Dark as night the longed delight ?
 I am love and thou art youth ;
 Love, be sweet, and, love, be truth.

X.

A LOVE'S RHETORIC.

Of beauty's heralds thou the last and best,
Thy flushing gladness, laughter-lit, doth wake
Forgotten echoes else unheard, and make
All dumb the pageants of the east and west.
Less fair than thou, leaps from his burning nest
The wingèd dawn and in the starry lake
Veiled round with dusky gold the sun does shake
Night on his flaming curls and beauteous breast.

When mute the spheral music of the skies
Their clouded silence answers from thine eyes,
And Nature's secret melody thou speakest.
O love, from earth to highest heaven reaching,
Of love-devoted bigots I the weakest
Do vainly try to say thy beauty's teaching.

XI.

Silver stars in heaven half seen,
Threads of sun that gleam between
Endless dullness dark and brown,
Precious gems to grace a crown,
Holding in their dainty bound
Each a circle large enough
Nobly fit to close in love ;
Harmonizing with a sound
All their music's severance,
Now uniting to the same
Magic letters of one name,
Ever weaving some romance
Round and round my silent claim.

XII.

La rose défleurit :
 Une seconde
En profane et flétrit
 L'odeur profonde.

C'est que tes cils lassés
Sont doucement baissés
Sur l'azur sans limite
Où mon amour s'abrite

Le soleil dépérit :
La nuit abonde
Et le jour ne fleurit
Plus dans le monde.

Car de tes cils foncés
Les rideaux redressés
Montrent l'azur qu'irrite
Mon amour sans limite.

XIII.

A sunny spot we found I know not where,
Its brightness, hung with summer's memories
I have forgotten with the summer skies
That crowned thy face and all thy gracious hair.
The tangled light was fading for me there,
A dearer light rose starward in thine eyes ;
Thy shadow falling on life's ecstasies
It was that blotted out all other care.

What mattered then the scarlet state of roses,
The golden gleam the lily's life encloses?
The crimson sweetness sweeter seemed on lips
Than blood of any vainly flushing flower.
Of all that rapture's dawn remembrance slips,
All but my love at love's first rising hour.

XIV.

When subtle Love met dreaming me, and you,
Your heart had panted with no wild unrest,
And would have never throbbed within your breast,
Love, save for things poor, commonplace, and few.
But sudden Love met longing me, and you,
And said that He was all and He was best
Between the waking east and waning west,
Between the western and the eastern hue.

Your spirit's whiteness blushing with no stain,
Its blank unwritten bore no tale of pain
When subtle sudden Love met you and me.
A wanderer through worldly woes, I thought
I knew life's ways until your beauty wrought
That sudden change of love for you in me.

XV.

La mort te va venir. Tu ferme les yeux
 Et vas, tu vas, à peine farouche :
 Et ton âme allongée anime ta bouche
 Ton charme devient plus harmonieux
 Mais que tes cils chers et sérieux :
 Ou bien sur ton front le soleil se couche
 Au jour transformé quand l'ennui te touche
 Et l'ombre s'accroît jusqu'à tes cheveux.

Tes yeux entrevus sont mon paradis
 Ou viennent faiblir mes espoirs hardis,
 Portés vers l'azur et vers tes prunelles,
 Oiseaux dans l'orage, oiseaux étourdis
 Qui cherchent refuge aux espaces frères
 Et l'ayant trouvé referment leurs ailes.

XVI.

TO —

If you could cease to love or I begin,
Less heavily my loveless hours might tire,
And love allure some hope to lose or win
What my will's languor deigns not to desire.

 Your love I smiling leave not all unprized,
 Or laughing spurn its chilly worth despised.

But even had you for me your tender truth
Not meant, were you still starry-faint and far,
As golden-fresh and fair as sunny youth
Can be, as dear and distant as a star,

 Yet should my love for you nor rise nor sink,
 Nor from pale deepen to a steady pink.

“But why this stony look, and why this mask?
Has love no terror for your careless eyes?”

And so you speak like foolish souls who ask
Why things are thus and why not otherwise!

 Ah! dear, learn this, that love has many names,
 And reason has in love not any claims.

XVII.

THE ECSTASY OF SIGHT.

Music from my delight sets to a dearer
Tune the jingle of restless leaves and rustling
Fancies brushing against a tired summer :
As the flame of the daytime curls in the ashes,
Curls and twisting up leaps to where the grass is,
Reaching lover-like all the tossing trouble,
Munch of grasses and crest of flowers and branches,
Even so, love, the sweet sight of thee still leaping
To my eyes as a flame, is trembling gladly,
Flame of love in the vision's first delighting,
Flame that quivers about my soul and senses !

Flame-like now from my eyes there springs to meet
thee,
Love, there starts from me love to fold thee safely,
Round and round in the glance's mesh and tangle,
Safe and sweet in desire's most endless weaving,
From the loom of the sunlight, with the threaded
Sun's own glory or with the moonlight's languor,

Such a cloud as may dazzle other lovers,
Screening starrily flesh and soul and beauty,
Flame of love in the vision's first delighting,
Flame that quivers about my soul and senses !

XVIII.

IN PARADISE.

Through summer fields that brush against the sky,
And mingle with the mists their grassy line,
The pathway narrowing winds up on high
Where dusky trees the rising road confine.
The poppy's crimson at thy feet is crushed,
Trampled to yellow 'mid the yellow corn.
Alone my heart's dim pantings are not hushed,
Its throbs are heard above all fear of scorn.
A sudden bird is swift in downward flight
With lightning feathers flashing silently,
While seaward sloping to the sunny right
Land and sky are one with a cloudy sea.
And peaceful love and secret hope are one,
And heaven seems to earthly lovers won.

XIX.

Faut il dire que je t'adore
Sans redouter ton cher mepris
Pour voir le sang qui les colore
S'animer sur tes traits surpris ?
Car peut-être si tu souris
Is se pourrait bien que je garde
Parmi mes souvenirs fleuris
Un sourire offert par mégarde.

XX.

THE SNARING OF A SOUL.

Love whispered, and I who heard not knew not
Why all was light and strange, and new revealed
The noon unquiet, lately fair and hot,
Nor why it burned in beauty unconcealed.
The dazzling silver of the filmy waters
With dazzled tears had filled my eyelids wet,
And blurred the light as when the day's dark daughters
Across the silence spread their starry net.
Then with the bait which you unknowing gave
My soul was snared when naught my soul could save.

XXI.

A REGRET

Is it at last told that tenderest tale,
Dead and done with, finished all of it,
Left not a reader to rise at the call of it,
Sigh and flush, dreamily sad at the fall of it,
Wonder and sigh that the world is so pale !

Whither has fled my fair fancy so frail
That the only worthy hue for it
Was on a flower's wing when butterflies sue for it,
And the first morning dew nourishment due for it
Ere the leaf's earliest beginning to fail !

XXII.

PASSION.

Half tenderly, but more in playfulness,
On me you flashed your smiling thoughtless eyes,—
That look and smile and that unmeant caress
Were my last vision of love's paradise.
The chain of fancies I let slip : it broke
And scattered like the winter's fading snow.

And as joy lost itself in empty smoke,
What tender things and sweet died at one blow.
Even as the poppy's trampled crimson turned
Beneath your feet to match the worthless weeds,
Even so my will's high strength to love that yearned
Was drawn as iron to the stone that leads.
And passion fell around me, fell from you,
From all, and claimed from knowledge passion's
due.

XXIII.

ON A BRANCH OF MIMOSA.

I.

Ah ! could I within my palm
But only
Grind to dust and death and calm
Leaves of love and blossoms lonely !

II.

Or could I thy beauty hold,
Mine all of it,
As now my mimosa's gold
Robbing easily each ball of it.

III.

Darling flowers, that a touch
The merest
From the hands of love made such
As to fading be my dearest !

IV.

For about the shrivelled leaves
There clings
Some life aromatic, that leaves
Not the dull decaying things,

V.

Long and narrow, greyish, thin,
And balls
Having rubbed against thy skin
Powdered gold that flies and falls.

VI.

Even as now beneath my lips
The dust,
Golden-grain'd, still scattered slips
Not yet tarnishing to rust ;

VII.

Keeping brightness of thy hair,
But rough
As my harsh and loveless care,
Fair as only locks of love.

VIII.

But the dry leaves stiffly twist,
And break
Under kisses like unkissed
Love of mine that for thy sake

IX.

Has forgotten dewy rain
And moist,
As before the heat of pain
When the vivid morn rejoiced.

X.

Ah ! could I within my palm
But only
Grind to dust and death and calm
Leaves of love and blossoms lonely !

XI.

Or could I thy beauty hold,
Mine all of it
As now thy mimosa's gold,
Robbing easily each ball of it.

XXIV.

MORE THAN TRUTH.

No longer do I know if thou art fair
Or if the truth my vision might disgrace,
Nor do I know if other men would care
To make their sweetest heaven of thy face,
But what to me the words that others speak,
Their thoughts, their laughter, or their foolish gaze ?
For hast thou not a herald on my cheek
To tell the coming nearer of thy ways,
And in my veins a stranger blood that flows,
A bell that strikes on pulses of my heart,
Submissive life that proudly comes and goes
Through eyes that burn, and speechless lips that part ?
And hast thou not a hidden life in mine,
In thee a soul which none may know for thine ?

XXV.

LOVE'S SECRECY.

When I love thee and feel my love aspire,
Until my life then seems thy very own
And thine at one with mine and my desire,
It is not thy sweet self I love alone,
And not thy splendid strength, thy thoughtless face,
And all thy body's beauty and thy hair
Whose sunny tangles have a brighter grace
Than mystic lovers see in rapt Greek air.
Not in these are the secret of thy sway,
The sudden spell unsaid through weary years
Now making winter meaningful with May !
O words unsung no lover calmly hears !
But silent ever is love's ecstasy,
And ever mute my deepest love must be.

XXVI.

MORE THAN TIME.

On the flesh of rosy marble
Soft close hair whose gold is curly,
On the lips the laughter's berry
Opens scarlet, just as merry
As the tuneful voice's early
Soaring shrill entrancing warble.

Were thy marble at a touch,
Sweet, to shake and seem to crumble,
And on laughing lips the fruit
Eaten away by grief, and mute
Smiles unspeakable, pale and humble,
O should I not love as much?

XXVII.

A GLIMPSE OF TRUTH.

I.

I know thy beauty's meaning, dear :
A crystal cup, a marvel clear,
Cool as the pallid dew,
A bright and bubbling bowl
Whose pure and stainless hue
Contains a life's control.

II.

Within that clearness crystalline
The liquid whiteness seems to shine
In fiery flush beneath
Some ruby rainbow-arch,
Or sparkling sapphire sheath
For lips that thirst and parch.

III.

But fast the glass is sealed and close
From timid love's most early blows

The pent-up pleasure's spell.
When bolder love now knocks
And knows the crystal shell
Still firmly clasps and locks.

IV.

But should one smash at last the cup,
Thy beauty's magic broken up,
One drop, one poor and pure,
One brightness undestroyed,
Then, say, should it endure
Or melt in dewy void?

XXVIII.

How shall I send my love to thee?
Sailing in a boat the sea,
Flitting like some stingless bee,
Or fancy-faint, or frank and free,
Shall I crouch for One to see
Lover's bend and humble knee,
Or shall I simply say: Love me?

Alas ! I lose my love unheard,
Lose what silence has incurred,
Never ruffling by a word
Calm like the freedom of a bird,
Eyelids steady, eyes not blurred,
Down of feathers softly furred,
By no rough fingers touched or stirred.

My heart is a garden grief has weeded
Not of all the hopes that seeded
In the springtime's prime unneeded,
When comes the cold will they not be dead ?
Link by link like jewel-beaded
Strings of pearl, the love that pleaded
Is shattered with the love none heeded.

XXIX.

A LOVER'S PLEADING.

O love that art so poor in love, and rich
Above the rich in precious body's gold,
How great thy lack in wit of look and speech,
And greater still thy want of thoughts untold.

Art thou a ruler over land and sea,
With purple on thy lips and in thy blood,
Or is it shame whose changing stains we see,
The snow's impulse, the crimson overflow?
Does thy fair body's beauty pale and flush,
The fairer bloom for chilly scorn or rage
At that dull soul whose void and weight do crush
And twist the metal of its splendid cage?
Thy soul is beggared, and thy beauty cruel
Were to refuse my love, thy soul's one jewel.

XXX.

Since the light in you began
To excel the sunlight wan,
Every wish to catch your hue,
Painting it with lover's brush,
Hallowing the fancy's flush,
Ended when my love I knew
No mere bloom for hands to crush,

Simply twisting with the flawless
Turn of fingers strong and lawless

Ease the petals and the stem.
Pardon, dear, if once to break for you
Hold of stone-surrounded gem
Ever was my hope and aim—
Now my heart knows but to ache for you.

XXXI.

A SHORT ABSENCE.

These many weary weeks and days and hours
Since I saw you, O long lost love long parted,
Were two less joyous than when love was ours ?
Did you, I wonder, smile half heavy-hearted ?
Do you regret my joy and love and pain,
Ere waking from my lingering lover's trance
To see the cold, dull mist, the misty rain
Across the love-lit heavens of romance ?
I loved you once with strength of all my dreams,
And love was then the meaning of the morrow ;
But scarcely seen and silent now it seems
As if forgotten quite that lover's sorrow,
As if remembered not that love-belief ;
Alas ! for bitter is the woe that's brief.

XXXII.

And yet, and yet, it was but yesterday
When speech of yours was dear to me, and dearer
Than highest song outsoaring earthly day ;
Your voice could sound the note of heaven clearer.
The world had then no gold save in your hair ;
Your curvèd mouth smiled all the wit that flashes
And passionate and tender looks there were
More than half shadowed under mystic lashes.
I thought that Love and you were Beauty's twins,
And loving you was life's most lovely duty :
I know now fancy loses and time wins
When in the game they play the stake is beauty.
For now your fairness chilly gleams like snow,
That chilly fairness once did crimson glow.

XXXIII.

WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN.

I.

Loved the least and loved the most,
Love the faintest, love the truest,
Dwells in thee a haunting ghost,
Tender-eyed, with eyes the bluest,
Crimson-smiling, snowy-soul'd
As starry-pure, as lovely hearted
As a maiden dream untold,
Scarce meeting felt, forever parted.
Love that rose in troubled eyes,
In trembling hearts that faints and dies ;
Love that softened careless lips,
And like a fancied falsehood slips ;
Love that speaking could deceive,
Or speechless turn aside and grieve,
Many times before and after
Came to be mine, were mine at last,
Came with shyness, stayed with laughter,
And weeping went with love outcast.

Loved the least and loved the best,
Love the faintest, love the truest,
Dwells in thee a tender guest,
Haunting-eyed, with eyes the bluest.

II.

O love, still unforgotten and for ever
Must be that sad and silent seaside town,
Where love and time and we contrived to sever
All that remained of love at love's last frown.
Do you remember where we stood together,
The open window and the quiet street,
The heated softness of the summer weather ?
The few faint flowers were no longer sweet,
The ivy 'mid the dusty stones was crawling,
The yellow mignonette shrank from the day ;
Although no sound along the breeze was falling,
Its mild breath seemed to come from far away.
O love, thy face alone escapes me now ;
I see it all once more—but where art thou ?

XXXIV.

FAREWELL TO ROMANCE.

I.

Pretty, were you ?
Well, that is more than I should like to swear,
Though once I may have thought I knew
Your beauty's price above the common care
Of those who called your skin and hair
But fresh and fair.

II.

At any rate
It was no such strange matter I now think,
No high romantic rose of fate
That brimful blushes hiding half the brink
Where thirsty fancies bathe or drink
Amid the pink.

III.

In you no flaw
The daily blot appeared—for day by day

Love would wipe out, and sweetness saw
In all you did : some fairer nature's way
That languid droop ! And so through May
Till blue was grey.

IV.

You were not one
Whom even a lover's folly could find clever.
(But after all what's lost or won
From beauty's fondness by the thought's endeavour
That soul from flesh life did not sever ?)
—Good-bye, forever !

XXXV.

LOVE'S PRISON.

I.

A gleam of sky that lets in space,
A bitter fountain in a lonely place,
A bird that sings by day and wearies not by night,
A pool that mirrors still one face,
And with its dead fair undecaying grace
Is bubbling bright.

II.

Above the sky one star alone,
Whose steady flame on earth unlit has thrown
Romance on waters ere the bitter taste was there,
Turning the bird's bold song to moan
And scorn, near beauty's mirror poisonous grown
A sepulchre.

XXXVI.

The empty marvel of a splendid cage
With fretted gold and twisted silver wire
Thy body seems, and mine a lover's rage
That gilds thy painted show with rich desire.
And round the precious metal of the bars
Flowers scarlet-hearted, and pale passion-flowers,
And crowded jasmine mingle as the stars,
Dewy with scent of kisses, warm with showers.
Of marble, lily and pure snow, the floor,
The windows stained with sunlit ruby shine,
Of azure water clear the sapphire door
That never turns on hinges crystalline :
 The bird within is mute and does not sing,
 And dull his tuneless throat, and clipt his wing.

XXXVII.

THE STORY OF A LOVE.

I.

First I saw and did not guess,
You some being born to bless
Under guise of human flesh,
Fair enough, nor more nor less,
Soul and body in one mesh
Made of wish for loveliness.

II.

Next I gazed, but all too fine
Was the future fancy's sign,
For me to escape the net
With the hunted swift design—
Had I gazed more deeply yet,
Still the hunter's rage was mine.

III.

All in one the hunted host
Was I, and the hunter's boast,

Hunt and hunter all in one,
Or, but at the very most,
Now the winner, now the won,
Or the seer, or the ghost.

IV.

That's when liking first began
And from liking liking ran,
Till what in the other rose
Stops now sickly-faint and wan,
Seen once by my stranger rose,
Which romantic weathers fan.

V.

At the music's fated hour,
While mine upward to a tower,
Yet the other's rose-tree grew
Not to garden, not to bower,
That could flush the summer blue,
Fall again in crimson shower.

VI.

Its one blossom singly blown
Only showed a rose alone,

Silent of a coming flood,
In the present born and thrown,
Hopeless too, without a bud,
That for failing could atone.

VII.

But about me and around
Lofty handfuls from the ground,
Mingling scents and colours mated,
Till the senses wild and bound,
Rosily intoxicated
Cross the last desirous bound.

VIII.

O the world's red worth, behold
Flame in sight ere growing cold,
Petals over petals spreading,
Starry blushings thousandfold,
Open glories sweet in shedding,
Buds with meanings long untold.

IX.

Bloom on bloom, and layer on layer,
From the snowy flower of air

To the scarlet blood between
Leaves the clove carnations bare,
Lapped in visionary green,
Mount up as incense to prayer !

X.

On high fancy's instrument,
Clad in prayer the splendour sent
Could have reached the heaven's retreat,
Had not Love who raising meant,
Laid beneath those careless feet,
Yours to take what passion lent.

XI.

Why not stoop and stretch the hand,
Passion's power at once command,
While the roseleaf's fresh untired
Covers common stone or sand ?
Even though stooping be required,
Yours a lordship of the land.

XII.

Underneath if mud of earth
Seem presage of poorer mirth,

Fellow-joys more near the mire,
More of dross, less earthly dearth,
Still from garlands of desire
Well you pluck a crowning's worth.

XIII.

Look how fair the branches torn
For your curls as clouds for morn,
Roses for you, none to sting.
Is there need to scan my thorn?
Painless pleasure clasp and fling
Pleasure's pain to one forlorn.

XIV.

Should I try a shepherd's lay,
Piping on the rustic hay,
Should I sing as others sung,
Making tuneful yesterday,
Singers when their world was young
And the saddest song was gay?

XV.

Or is silence ever best?
Friendly beauty's shallowest,

Loveless depths of deadly liking,
Silently to prove and test ;
Love in arms, and never striking
Blow save sure behind a jest ;

XVI.

As in laughter, love or pride,
In a flower's pink gift to hide,
What love did not own to want,
What to offer was denied :
In the thanks that nothing grant,
Hopes to seize and hug aside ?

XXXVIII.

THE SLAVE OF BEAUTY.

I think thou art of limbs and curls so fair
Only to cloud thy empty brain and soul
Under a flesh that matches golden hair
And curves that veil a blank the stars control.
Thy day my heart does long to feel and follow,
And on thy heart to find a dawn's delight :
But false and fair thy gold and pink, and hollow
As scentless flowers by day or moon by night.

Thy arms and throat and shoulders and thy voice,
Thy strength, thy shyness, all thou hast of sweet,
Are all but lily lies and rosy choice
Of Love's unconscious charms that chain and chea
 Hadst thou been ill or old or weak and shallow,
 Then how wouldst thou have seemed both bare
 and shallow.

XXXIX.

MURDERED LOVE.

'To some sad wood the path of fancy leads
And where the swaying shade with summer's breath
Is trembling dimly while the floral death
Is worthless strewn, a wreck 'mid rotten weeds.
Surely the soul's first shudder darkly reads
The warning signals rising from beneath
The pallid pool, whose lilies weave a wreath
As if to shroud some murdered Love who bleeds.

'The subtle sunlight, slanting from between
The gilded leaves and dazzling all their green,

No longer showed as you were standing there
Your loveliness to love a cherished clue,
Your drooping lashes and your flashing hair,
But the eyes that wearied and the soul I knew.

XL.

I.

This is the worst : the weary love,
A shrinking shape by day, a ghost
By night, with passion marred and rough
With mire where sank a chanted boast.

This is the worst and this the best :
Forgetfulness, dull, void, and rest.

II.

This is the worst : the worn out grace
That made of hope's desire a bond
Between the soul and starry space,
A broken bond, and naught beyond.

This is the worst, and this the best ;
Forgetfulness, dull, void, and rest.

III.

This is the worst : the love that craves
And wearily does weary not
Unto the death that drowns and saves,
But in some life has bitter lot.

 This is the worst, and this the best :
 Forgetfulness, dull, void, and rest.

IV.

Is this thy worst ? Beneath this worst
Be sure some greater lack there is
Of dawn, some darkness deep accurst,
Waters whence wells the soul's disease !
 Where all is worst and all is best,
 O say, what is the bitterest ?

XLI.

LOVE AND HATE.

Believe me, just to hear your laugh rejoice,
To see pride smiling curve your loveless lips
Earth can change till heaven seem the lesser choice
Or cover paradise with hell's eclipse.

A hint of tenderness, a word for love
To feed and languish on, a languor feigned
By you, heaven's glories men were dreaming of,
Earth would transcend and heaven's delights were
gained.

But at the frown that draws your grace disgraced
For harshness sullen sweetness to expel,
The lip's curl simply proud no more, effaced
By earthy scorn disdainful, O then hell !
And so my love is bound by the equal fate
To hate and love, to love you and to hate.

XLII.

DESIRE.

Whatever hints are sweet or speak of pleasure
And weave their magnet strength in stony air
Till One that calls to lift them from the mire
Men think they hear, and straining ever higher
Their soul is struck with soul-compelling pressure,
Smitten the heart with heart-controlling care :
All these are slaves to serve the King Desire.

The griefs that find the soul and leave it lonely,
Pain that is born in longings that entrance,
Another's love, another rising nigher
The nameless hope whose hopes tyrannic tire
With too much dim delight : and not these only
But beauty, youth, high fancy and romance :
All these are slaves to serve the King Desire.

And lesser things than blossoms blowing fuller
With open bloom of petalled joy or woe,
A flush half tinged with shame, the lovely dyer,
A frankness harsh and dear, now sweetly shy,
And subtle dreams that own the mind for ruler,
Wan thoughts the skilful brain learns not to know :
All these are slaves to serve the King Desire.

Whatever lives and dies through earthly seasons
Whether young spring be there with sleepless eyes,
Or summer lull the winds with her soft lyre
Till autumn shake anew the languid fire
That lasts all through the winter's stranger treasons
Betraying love's most false securities :
All these are slaves to serve the King Desire.

XLIII.

LOVE AND WEARINESS.

No idol thou for passion's eager will
To make a holy worship of thy name ;
Not thine our praise : remembered not thy claim :
Thy shrine no temple on love's lofty hill.
What rules thy life and soul, their wayward skill,
Has not the spell that masters rosy shame,
And tender pride and beauty like a flame
Desirous, one through starry good and ill.

No God with ministers of hope and fate,
He came, but humbly at my heart's low gate
There knocked a languid boy, a beggar maid ;
His limbs were wan : her tarnished golden dress
Did match his faded hair. And this she said :
" He is thy Love, and I am Weariness."

XLIV.

THE LAST REVOLT.

Of love or hate the choice is yours, the gift
Is mine : my passion now stands passion-still,
Between the tossing ways of winds that drift
This side and that my passion's dizzy will,

Right and left, down and high.

Love me : I look no higher than your slave ;
Could I for one swift hour without alloy
Of pain but give your soul a thing you crave,
But to renew the treasure of your joy,

I would live, I would die.

But love may never seek your colder ways—
O had I then but for one bitter minute,
The bloom beloved of all your loveless days,
All in my grasp and power, to crush or win it,

You should sigh, you should sigh.

Desirous hate would flash in hatred's lust,
And shrivelled love cool down to scattered dust.

XLV.

LESS THAN LUST.

If I follow fault and flaw,
Dearness others never saw,
Dear, in thee, 'tis not by law
Fate to loving blindness reads
So that seeing naught it needs
Price not worth of daily weeds,
Common things that seem and shoot,
But by taking with the fruit
Taste not bitter in the root.
In our case it is not thus,
Nothing with thee, naught with us,
Fate had in the amorous
Fancy's strange romance to fling,
Not one feather from her wing,
Of her frail the frailest thing—
Love had meant us not to love,
Looked and frowned and said : Enough ;
In a scourge he changed thy glove,

On thy brows he dimmed the day,
Made a summer out of May,
Nearer brought where winter lay,
All of thee and of thy knight,
Building in the middle night
Temple for the soul's delight,
Shrine of love-forgotten bars,
Prison-like without the star's
Blessing on the deed that mars,
Bitter as some poison's cup
Under carvings covered up,
What delight desire would sup
On and feed till dreamy trust,
Mingling with a new disgust,
Finds his hungry thirsting, Lust.

LIONEL.

HE had one gift divine the gods must give,
And having given lesson day by day ;
No strength he had, no beauty to outlive,
Only to learn youth met him yesterday.
No treasure treasured he, no bright control
To sway the worldly will or his desire,
Not even to lull in song his sobbing soul,
For broken all the strings were of his lyre.
Grief, prison-like, had walled him round with woe,
And tears and blood he wept for living pride.
Love's mercy led the edge and let him know
The sword of sin that stained his heaving side :
 Though all men's joys were each a crowning thorn,
 He laughed in eager pain that rose to scorn.

NARCISSUS.

THE empty woods are soundless, still, and vain,
The pool no mirror for the languid breeze,
The sunlight falls in drops of silent rain,
And life, a shadow, rustles past the trees.
The branches bend until the ways are dim ;
Earth bears afar her distant sphere of care,
And from the fragrant grass there starts a slim
And tender stem that guides a world more fair.
Not a mere starry freshness in the spring,
With flush of early gold and later snow,
More than the fancies fainter blossoms fling
About the visioned woods of long ago,
A modern symbol of a soul's desire,
Narcissus blooms beneath the morning fire.

AFTER FLIRTING.

I.

STOP ! My turn now ; pray let me speak !
Why, did you think, poor, foolish Walter,
A deeper stain, a shade on cheek,
Of late so frank, a whiter streak,
A word that paused to faint and falter,
A steady look that naught could alter,
But lowered lashes' curly ways,
With sudden flinching from their gaze :
Well, did you dream—you could not think !—
A rosy sleep (of just such pink
As once you said you praised the most
In me, since then my greatest boast) ?

II.

A slumber very strange, wherein
My gestures meaningful became,
The lifted and the drooping chin,
The restless signals of my skin,

The languid bend that drowsy came
Or went and melted in soft shame,
The thousand things a lover hopes
And sees : the devil's sand for ropes,
You hoped and feared and saw in me.
My friend, to do so you were free,
But here appears all sense beyond
The claim that I too should be fond.

III.

And if not fond as false a traitor,
Though not so fair or dear a one,
As any flirt of elder date, or
In modern love-affairs the debtor
Who owes as much as he has won,
And will but give the half or none,
Keeping his heart, the precious bubble
Unburst—for one more worth the trouble !
Because I chose to speak or move,
In such or such a way does it prove . . . ?
And who can say my words at all,
Once said, or what they meant recall ?

IV.

What harm if we first talk it over?
No anger, please. Nay, do not frown—
Even a wrinkle the merest let not hover—
Yes, for my sake! I can uncover,
Show you . . . If I glance up or down,
And if my eyes are dark or brown—
Not black, you know—with little light
In them save as “some sunny night” . . .
These your own words. I should have said,
Brown eyes not quite unmixed with shade.
Where was I? Ah! so. Much in a look
You thought you guessed—but, if locked the book?

V.

Or worse: if on the blank of me
You printed all that's yours, not mine?
It were not new for one to see
Only his gorgeous parody,
And not the blotted line on line
Beneath: besides, they say “in wine”
Not in the fancy is “the truth”:
The sweet romance—what if your tooth

Has found it hard, the taste too bitter,
The fault is yours. Think. On the sitter
Not fair enough is painter harsh ?
'Cause not a park abuse a marsh ?

VI.

Unhealthy, ugly, is the place :
But Beauty's want is not its vice
Thanks to your kindness in my case
(That earlier kindness which to efface
You laboured lately once or twice),
You learned to dream you thought me nice.
You start. What, more than nice, indeed ?
Take back your motion, you have need ;
No note, swear I, shall I have taken,
Nor my assured sense scarcely shaken
In your clear eyes and in your taste.
Forget, and to amend make haste !

VII.

Consider, and I may endeavour
To show me as I am : not pretty,

As vain and strange as lovers ever
Have cursed against, self-willed and clever,
Less than some people say : a pity !
With gilt of glitter that's called witty
At times : and selfish-passionate
As any madman who was great
And small and naught all in one breath,
As if the minute next were death,
As much of very life his aim
As sense and brain could touch or claim.

VIII.

Enough of me ! Ah ! Walter, still
You plead who should be lord and strong !
For what am I of good or ill
But for the willing of your will,
Of you the singer, I the song,
And yours, and yours, for short, for long !
The bird the cruel hawk has captured
Is not more meek than I the enraptured !
The falcon not so fierce in flight
As I near thee, my love, and light,
With hands and souls that strain to twine.
Ah ! darling, ah ! my darling, thine !

*A STORY IN FOUR SONGS, AND IN
DOGGEREL.*

I.

How that song shrieked out of tune,
At the Prince's Hall in June,
Have I managed to remember ?
Silly words about the moon
Not forgotten in November !
Yet it ended not too soon :
Jack began to fume and fidget,
Asked me, " Could one not abridge it,
Words and bosh about the moon,
Most of all the Lady Bridget
Singing sadly out of tune : "

When the moon has ceased to moan
Wearily all the night alone,
And the wind to grope in vain,
Blindly led by the wailing rain,
My love will come again,
Will come again to me.

Jack said : " Lovers come to her !
Now I wonder who would stir,
In the rain, too. What a folly !
Well a fellow were a jolly
Fool to play the taper's midget
To the portly Lady Bridget.
What a bore. . . . Why, let us bridge it,
With . . ." He stopped. I looked at Jack,
Laughing to another man,
Gazing on his neighbour's back,
With a blow I shut my fan,
Made a pretence not to fidget,
Opened eyes on Lady Bridget
While she sang about the moon
More and more without a tune :

For the moonlight knows when love,
Wearily all the night alone,
Clouds below and stars above,
Blindly led by the wailing rain,
 May come, may come again,
 May come again to me !

Jack was near enough for me
Not to seem to and to see,

Handsome, sulky, fair and nice,
Hard as iron, cool as ice
(Cool always, save once or twice
When I thought . . . Oh ! 'twas my fancy ;
He's just the same to Bell or Nancy !),
Jack now turns again his cheek—
I know not why, in a fright,
My lace fan I long to bite
So to keep from wish to speak.

Daytime has no joys for me,
Wearily, all the day alone,
Voices sound and laugh, but he
Speechless now as my silent pain,
 Comes not, comes not again,
 Comes not again to me.

II.

I.

A maiden was moaning where shady
And soft the sad leaves rained above,
Once came there to soothe her a lady
With wisdom of liking not love.

She said, "I am Truth, and to heal thee
I have brought for thy love long endured
A glass thou shalt look on, and feel thee
As one who is cured.

II.

"For in it of all things the most truthful,
My glass, thou shalt surely behold
What visions are bending thy youthful
And bright lover to pleasures untold.
The wings of the angels unholy
Surround and about him have spread
A veil thy pure eyes shall not wholly
To discover be led.

III.

"In no battle of war as thou fearest
Was he lost, for thy tears as a dew
To keep green the grave of the dearest
In the hope of a meeting anew.
Thy lover who left thee is living,
And death has not stolen from thee
The life that he long has been giving
To lust over the sea.

IV.

"But one whom thy heart now despises,
More worthy he soon shall appear ;
Forget thou the worthless as wise is
And learn that in Truth is thy cheer.
His curls have the gold of the lily,
The scent of the spring in his curls,
When thou smilest the winter's less chilly
And sunlight unfurls.

V.

"Speak but once, or be mute, he rejoices."
But the maiden grew paler than grief,
And she sighed with a look where no choice is,
Away from despair of relief,
Away from the glass of the Lady.
"For my love who was false and not fair,"
She cried 'mid the woods lone and shady,
"Was my lot and my share."

Again this old and foolish way of mine !
The music quivers still with its last whine
About my ears, and doubtless on my lashes
It sparkles and is dewy. . . . But more rash is

A woman who dares weep than she who sings
At sorrow that is feathered with light things,
Dainty sighs graceful as the pretty verses
We warble to the men ; for nothing worse is
Of course when one of us is tired and sad,
Than to indulge a whim, a wish, a fad. . . .
Sadness indeed no longer in the fashion
Must yield to all that's in the passing passion.
No tears have I, not any tears at all,
Ready to redden eyelids, should they fall,
Those women's tears, that weakness we take pride in,
Because we hope to blind with tears we hide in
Our foe, our friend, our strong and captured lord,
For us the reason both of deed and word.
This monster's blind, we cry, for thick the shade is
'Twixt us and him ; but yet beware, dear ladies !
This monster is our master, blind or not,
That's firm and sure ; and quick enough a blot
The man may see too well, of specks the merest,
Even though his sight we prove none of the clearest.
More than the soundest eyes from truth beseech
His senses learn in what a touch can teach,
The earthy lore of self, the subtle spirit
That will bear naught above and only near it

The food of joy for hands and lips and ears,
Delight from laughter or delight from tears,
The equal lust that longs for power and pleasure—
What woman loves these rulers of our leisure
But has found out the grown man in the boy,
For sweets they wail, for sweets that never cloy !
For love-desires that shake the soul and sound it,
And leave it just the same as they have found it ;
Such wisdom and such skill is man's at best !
At worst I have always scope for a jest,
A sigh, a dance, a whirl that sends one breathless,
And restless. . . . Else . . .

I.

On his lips the blood is dear
(Scarlet show the lips I love),
On mine richer dyes appear,
Deeper dyes of summer's bleeding
Such as fall in time's unheeding ;
But the breath between his lips
(Poor, O poor this soul of mine !)
Rules my thoughts, like waves the ships.

II.

Sunlight brightens when he speaks
(Scarlet show the lips I love),
Smoother crimson on my cheeks,
Fairer flesh and bright beguiling,
Subtler mouth and made for smiling ;
But the words he says to me
(Poor, O poor this soul of mine !)
Stars reflected in the sea.

III.

Shall I never feel his mouth
(Scarlet show the lips I love)
Near as blossoms of the south,
Blooms I kiss through scented hours
Crushing sweetness from the flowers,
Petalled whiteness, bloodless now
(Poor, O poor this soul of mine !)
Sending numbness to my brow.

IV.

Golden-kissed with splendid down
(Scarlet show the lips I love)
Where the darkest gold is brown,

Lips whose proudest flush is fuller
Swelling than perfection's duller
Creed desires, and swift and sweet
(Strong, O strong, this might of thine !)
Golden-kissed for lips to greet !

III.

I.

A last look in the lonely mirror's living blank,
But one look more, and one again for empty space,
In smooth ripples to crowd and eddy half to curls,
Half to dusk where my hair's dull stream escaped and
sank,
In the glass, with my drowning eyes and all my
grace
Poor and ghost-like, a woman's smiling, once a
girl's.

II.

'Twixt this whiteness and me—on soul and flesh this
frost,
And the summer's warm flush, and spring and youth
and me,
The cold minutes of chilly centuries have spread,

As a mist, as a veil, to cover what I lost,
What I had once as mine, to show mine, or to see,
The blood's beat in the blood, the crimson in
the red.

III.

Could I reach deep enough, could I drag forth to the
air,
To the sight of the men that see,—for none to
prize,
None to wish to obtain my one gift's single
granting :
As when none saw my silent cravings, dumb and bare,
Prayers unknown to me, hidden in my girlish eyes,
The child's helpless, the woman's weak and
fearful wanting.

IV.

Can it be that my laughter sounded shrill and merry,
That I hoped, and that hope was not the worse
deceiving,
That my mouth had not tasted of that rotten
cheat,

Whose desire was not mine ; but bitter was the berry
And my lips have forgotten not the stain's sharp
leaving,
And the kiss of a love that knew not its deceit.

v.

Oh ! he knew not I know,—what husband is aware ?
What he wishes from things, and sport, and luck,
and life,
That he knows is enough—when one's an
Englishman,
For less knowledge of course then does one need to
care :
The last race, the next hunting season ! But a wife
Is the smallest of cares—for which I thank the
man !

vi.

The shapes of grief are manifold,
For frightened eyes that must behold
The wretched tortures of the truth.
The worst despair is not in youth
When hope still lurks, a jewel yet
Unbroken and in ruby set

Of purest tear and crystal clear
That longs for love and lovely cheer.
My tears are dry, I cannot cry,
My best relief, my worst : a sigh.

VII.

To feel the world, one's self, a blank,
A sea where hope and last loves sank,
All hope, all love, all fear, all trust !
Not even remains a languid lust
Or madness dark with strength to kill
Flesh, soul, and cure their mingled ill ;
To feel in death the only faith
Of rest, and shrink with coward breath !
My tears are dry, I cannot cry,
My worst relief at best : a sigh.

IV.

And is it here, O love, and is it here
That I and you must play my love's last scene,
Where Tragedy's last painted king and queen
Are making Fashion's self forget to sneer ?

How far has fate led us, and yet how near
From all that was, from what I know has been !
Your gestures—I can still say what they mean :
That mimic lover's speech you hardly hear !

I know that smile : of old my anodyne !
Its meanings curved, its coldness, have been mine,
Even as then your cheek so dearly flushes ;
You saw me, started half—the subtle chain
I fondly feel—the darling fancy rushes :
As in the past once, I and you again.

TO A MAN.

CALL me wilful, call me vain,
Say my pride is false disdain,
Woman's words as drops of rain,
Woman's ways as things that vex,
Cross my wishes, curse my sex,
Call me silly, call me proud,
Love me through a misty shroud ;
Lovers seem to hate what's clear,
Truth to lovers bringing fear.
Senseless often men appear ;
Only love me, love me, dear !
 I am but as thy love does make me,
 And as I am so take me,
 If silly, vain, or wilful,
 This does but prove thy love unskilful.

TO ONE THEY CALL GUILTY.

FAIR soul, what burden of a former birth,
And sinful memory of rapt intent,
Guiltless make thee, a purest penitent,
The weary mourner of sad virtue's dearth?
In dreamy vision thou, a dream on earth,
What cruel love with strangest anguish blent,
From wasted Paradise a curse was sent,
A sobbing gasp to quench thy yearning mirth?

O loveless heart, so full of love's disease,
O loving heart, so void of love's full ease,
What fastings and what prayers, and what despair,
What secret hours, what shadows of the night,
And wounded sunlight of the morning air,
May sever thy desire from hope's delight?

SHAME AND BEAUTY.

SWIFT hours and spirits drag the whirlwind star
Of Life through day's and night's retreat, or wait,
A mob in arms before Love's castle-gate,
With shrieks and shrill desires to rend and mar.
And 'mid these powers linked, twin Strengths there
are,

In wedded bonds a modern eager fate,
By motley Time's ill matches made to mate,
Contending foes whose peace is endless war.

For Beauty's stern romance, and dizzy Youth
And Hope, who wildly strives to tear the truth
From truthful Hell on Heaven's heights to flame,
And proud Desire in sweetest strength most dear,
Are all, with Wordly Guilt and Age and Fear,
Under one law, the brother-slaves of Shame.

TO ONE OF MY READERS.

A SEQUEL.

DEAR, if you read my verses so despised,
A worthless work no more mine you shall prove,
And if by you my fancies at all prized,
Then tenfold higher their value you remove.
Not vainly all my thoughtful hours expended,
Not all in vain my daylong thoughts of you,
Wishes one dawn began, another ended,
And dusky dreams that stole your weeping hue.
I give you words who would a greater treasure
To stir that smile about your curvèd lips,
And longer life than earthly powers measure,
To catch that look whose starlit faintness slips :
For love and joy unseen, and grief, I see,
Were never mine but as your slaves in me.

THE RENEWAL OF LOVE.

I.

O WOODS, whose many voices have one call
Alone for me, and only one at all,
Whose changeless meanings to the same tune sound,
Whether the silence or the storm abound,
One note in spring and one in summer-time,
And one again, the same, in winter found,
As like as love to life or rhyme to rhyme,
As blood-red rose to rose as red as blood,
One bloom of song, the same, whate'er the bud.

What matter if the snow be drooping chilly
On fields that bore the badge of stainless lily,
If leaves lie staining where the moss was green,
Loosened leaves as if they had never been,
Their pride a shadow, and their shade unseen?

The seasons are but garments for the earth,
Garments she wears and throws off, and their worth
Is less than crystal grief or pearl of mirth.
O woods, whose many voices have one call
Alone for me, and only one at all,
Whose meanings manifold the same resound,
Whether the silence or the storm abound.

II.

Love is thy life, and thy soul is desire ;
Love is thy lure, and in love is thy snare ;
Look on one merely, and know that one fair,
Gold for thee turns to the burning of fire.
Slimly and slenderly holding a torch,
Grace of the flesh as a lightning can scorch ;
Sight of the skin or the touch of a wrist,
All but one sight or one touch grows a mist.
Love's all thy life, and thy soul all desire,
Though one be snaring, the other a fire ;
Little thy thought of it, little the care ;
Follow, oh, follow, thy love everywhere !

III.

I.

A little more I long to stand
A lover by the loveless shore.
Ah ! could the wave but understand
A little more !

II.

Why does the lovely curving river
Bring from the hills his precious store,
Save for thy thanks to smile and quiver
A little more ?

III.

In weary western waters wide
Why throws the sun his shining lore ?
Only to swell thy languid pride
A little more.

IV.

And finding still more passionless
Thy moving beauty than before,
Rises to seek forgetfulness
A little more.

v.

But never clasps the quiet air,
Through all the spheres that him adore,
And learns to know his long despair
A little more.

IV.

When thoughts of thine or beauties thine are far
From me, then droops the Flower of the World,
Each breath too sickly poor, each line a scar,
Each petal hanging like a flag half furled.

The Sun did not unfold a sharper grief,
Lost dizzily in sorrow's labyrinth,
When for the Lady of the laurel-leaf
He sighed, or wept for fairer Hyacinth.

V.

That love is merely a flame in the air,
Only a candle the sun can put out,
That love can die, there are many who swear,
Old men and silent and singers who shout.

O weep if you have enough in your tears
To drown the sorrow of fate and of choice !
O say what comfort you find in dumb years,
I cannot sing for the sobs in my voice.

VL

I.

When my love unplucked was still
My whole
Heart and brain's relenting will,
A mimosa sprig I stole,

II.

Stole and sung when it was fresh,
Ere dust
Kissed the bloom, when on the flesh
Beauty's banner every gust

III.

Of the wind's appeal could stir,
Call of each curly wanderer,
Save just

Of one Land the Harbinger,
Herald of the Lord of Lust.
(When my love unplucked was still
My whole
Heart and brain's relenting will,
A mimosa sprig I stole.)

IV.

But when later with his host
He came,
 Ringing loud his wonted boast,
 Making known his cruel name,
 Fled before him Hope and Shame.

Y.

Lust was Lord of Love's desire,
And Time
Wooed no more the former fire
Of the gold mimosa's rhyme.

VI.

When my love unplucked was still
My whole
Heart and brain's relenting will,
A mimosa sprig I stole.

VII.

In the casket where I hid
My theft,
Sure beneath unlifted lid
It lay rotting since I left

VIII.

Spheres the foreign sunshine wore
And grace
Delicate of amber store,
Such as learns to shrink before
Dearer English commonplace.
(When my love unplucked was still,
My whole
Heart and brain's relenting will,
A mimosa sprig I stole.)

IX.

Till uncovered, at a glance
I saw
My mimosa's treasured chance,
Bright as waking from a trance
Love obeying lover's law.

x.

Weeks and minutes wearily
 Had gone,
Hopelessly were going by,
Yet the tender bloom lived on.

xI.

Pride of love, romance of love
 Had gone,
In my heart's most shadowed grove
Lust was there--and love lived on.

CONVENTIONALITY.

To him Her coyness calls, a maiden bride
Secure : for never yet have they who sold Her,
And bought and sold, her slaves and masters told Her
That duller curls Her hair on breast and side
(O lover, turn not here thy steps aside),
That dimmer now allures the sullen shoulder,
Duller and dimmer now the lips, and older
The wan and pallid palace of Her pride.

Though many in Her crowded halls do mingle,
Her lovers many, yet Her love is single—
And years have taught Her not a day's advance,
But still She smiles and makes the maddest meekest.
(O lover drink not here Her conscious glance,
She has no secret of all those thou seekest !)

LES AVEUX DU SILENCE.

LE Printemps gouverne et l'Eté colore,
Ta jeunesse l'un, l'autre ton attrait,
Et ta tête blonde exaltant l'aurore
Orne de son or mon aveu discret.

Toujours aux côtés de toi que j'adore
J'admire en silence et j'aime muet.
Le mot qui s'éteint, ma lèvre l'ignore,
Tu ne sauras point son désir secret.

Mon amour te fuit, mais tu m'illuminés
De rêves sans but aux heures divines
Quand le trop réel se tait endormi.

Que dois-je accomplir pour que tu devines,
Toi, tout mon amour, m'aimant à demi,
Que je suis pour toi plus que ton ami?

TO THE BEST BELOVED.

MARMORÉENNE indolence
De l'infrangible silence,
O nocturne nonchalance,
Mépris doucement voilé,
O symbole solitaire
Dont l'altier refus austère
Ne veut dire son mystère
Que l'amour a ciselé !

Dans tes réponses neigeuses
Aux demandes ténébreuses
De mes chansons hasardeuses,
Dans ton secret éternel,
Mon âme sans être lasse
S'anéantit, dans ta grace
Que nul songe ne dépasse
Et dans ton calme cruel,

Dans ta froideur souveraine
Si mortellement hautaine,
Si divinement sereine,
 Dans la blanche royauté
Couronnant d'une tendresse
Pale comme la tristesse,
A l'abri de la vieillesse
 Ton ineffable beauté.

De ta courte chevelure
Chaque boucle me torture,
Agrandissant la blessure
 De mon unique désir :
O les démenes subtiles
Et les blasphèmes steriles
Des extases inutiles
 Que rien ne peut assouvir !

O ma trop neigeuse idole,
Près de toi bien loin s'envole
Tout mon Désespoir frivole :
 O froide immobilité !

Tes yeux—la mort s'y reflète
Pareille à la violette
Dans l'améthyste muette,
O claire perversité !

Dans mon amoureux caprice
Plus insensé que Narcisse,
J'attendrai l'heure propice,
L'inévitable réveil,
Sur tes lèvres que j'implore,
Sur tes lèvres que colore
Déjà de sa rouge aurore
L'inextinguible soleil.

La blanche métamorphose
Emprunte la pourpre éclore
De la rougissante rose
Au royal été menteur,
Et sur ta bouche embaumée
Ma vie à demi pâmée
Boit la pourpre parfumée
De ta sanglante senteur.

A CHILD'S VISION.

To one who used to pluck in merry mood
Wild narcissi and hyacinths that grew
With childish daisies in a haunted wood,

There came once, ushered by the Springtime's hue,
A vision of the morning, silently ;
And to the child it seemed as if he knew

A gracious knight of Grecian chivalry,
Or dainty lord by painted magic shown
When Jason of the Golden Fleece you see,

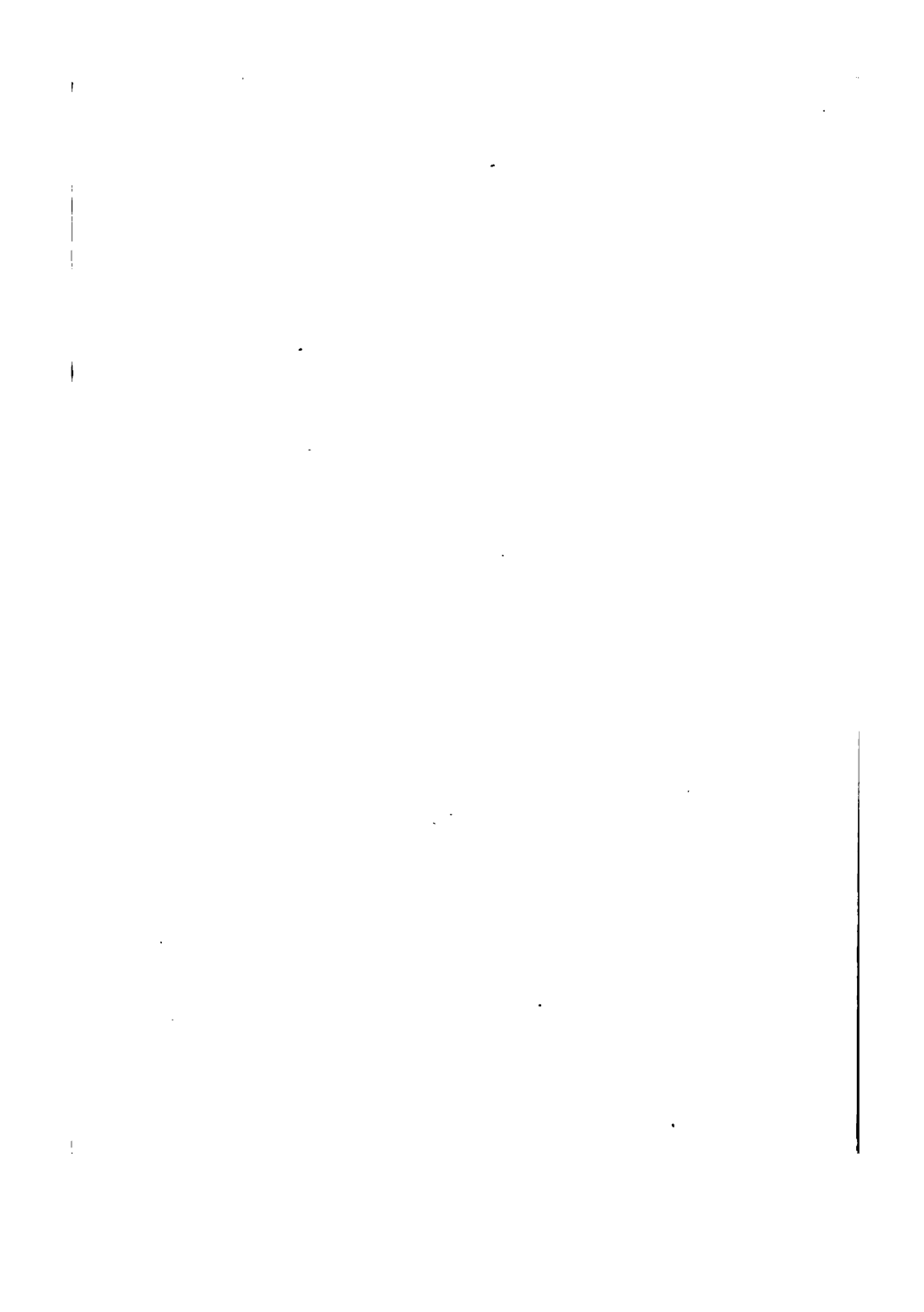
Or Hyacinth for whom the Sun does moan,
Or sweet Adonis hunting death, who might
Have lived and wooed love's royal Amazon,

Or Trojan Helen's darling brother-light :
So bold he looked and sweetly strong and fair,
With armour flashing back his curls more bright

In mailed sun and gold. Then bending there
In godlike arms he raised the panting child,
And lifted high amid the laughing air

The small pink face, whose look shrank not but smiled.
One minute more and he was gone who stood
A minute there, so great and frank and mild.

And naught was left but words half understood,
Some faded flowers in a child's tired hand,
Dim scents and memories in every land,
A lonely straying through a haunted wood.



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